

Message Text

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66

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CU-04 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SS-15 NSC-10 OMB-01 EB-11 AID-20

LAB-06 SIL-01 COME-00 PC-04 L-03 H-03 DODE-00 PM-07

RSR-01 /137 W

----- 038884

R 082050Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0499

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 3812

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: AUGUST/PROTEST AGAINST RISING COST OF LIVING WAS
PEACEFUL

REF: GUATEMALA 3808

1. STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' DEMONSTRATION ON AUGUST 7 PROTESTING
HIGH COST OF LIVING PROCEEDED PEACEFULLY WITH ABOUT 3000
PERSONS (ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS) MARCHING THRU NEAR-
DOWNTOWN ZONE 4 TO PLAZA IN FRONT OF TRAIN STATION. CROWD THEN
LISTENED TO SPEECHES BY LEADERS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION (AEU), TEACHERS' FRONT (FNM), AND CHRISTIAN DEMO-
CRATIC LABOR GROUP (CNT). CROWD DISPERSED AT 8:30 PM. HEAVY
RAINFALL THRUOUT AFTERNOON AND EVENING DAMPENED ENTIRE AFFAIR.

2. REGARDING DEATH OF STUDENT RODRIGUEZ BRACAMONTE, AUG 7
AFTERNOON PRESS CARRIED DENIALS BY VICTIM'S MOTHER THAT HE HAD
BEEN ABDUCTED FROM HOME BY ARMED MEN IN VEHICLE SIMILAR TO
THOSE USED BY NATIONAL POLICE. CHANGING STORY FROM THAT ORIGINALLY
REPORTED BY PRESS, SHE SAID THAT HE HAD "LEFT HOME TO BUY A
NEWSPAPER AND NEVER CAME BACK." GOG ALSO ANNOUNCED THE ARREST
OF TWO "COMMON CRIMINALS" WITH LONG RECORDS AND DECLARED THEM
TO BE RODRIGUEZ' ASSAILANTS. THE ACCUSED ARE NOW UNDER
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"INTERROGATION" TO DETERMINE IF OTHERS PARTICIPATED IN CRIME.

IN CONTRAST TO ITS NORMAL PRACTICE, GOG DID NOT GIVE DETAILS
ON EVIDENCE THAT LED TO ARRESTS.

COMMENT: WITH TEACHERS' MAIN GRIEVANCE OVER PAY RAISES DISPOSED
OF AND PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION COMPLETED, POTENTIAL FOR IMMEDIATE
CRYSTALIZATION OF POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER INCREASES OF COST
OF LIVING HAS PASSED. THE RISING CONSUMER PRICE INDEX MAY STILL,
HOWEVER, SPARK MORE TROUBLE FOR THE GOG IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
ALTHOUGH DEATH OF RODRIGUEZ CAME AT MOST INAPPROPRIATE TIME,
THIS ASPECT OF CURRENT PROBLEMS HAS PROBABLY NOW ASSUMED ONLY
MINOR IMPORTANCE IN GUATEMALA'S LONG HISTORY OF VIOLENCE.
BOWDLER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973GUATEM03812
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS BOWDLER
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730851/aaaablon.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 GUATEMALA 3808
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUGUST PROTEST AGAINST RISING COST OF LIVING WAS PEACEFUL
TAGS: PINS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005